

# Loues Labour's lost.

## Actus primus.

Enter Ferdinand King of Nauarre, Berowne, Longanill, and Dumaine.

**Ferdinand.**  
**I** Et Fame, that all hunt after in their liues,  
 Liue registred vpon our brazen Tombes,  
 And then grace vs in the disgrace of death:  
 when spight of cormorant deuouring Time,  
 Th'endeuour of this present breath may buy:  
 That honour which shall bate his sythes keene edge,  
 And make vs hayres of all eternitie.  
 Therefore braue Conquerours, for so you are,  
 That warre against your owne affections,  
 And the huge Armie of the worlds desires.  
 Our late edict shall strongly stand in force,  
 Nauar shall be the wonder of the world.  
 Our Court shall be a little Achademie,  
 Still and contemplatiue in liuing Art.  
 You three, Berowne, Dumaine, and Longanill,  
 Haue sworne for three yeeres terme, to liue with me:  
 My fellow Schollers, and to keepe those itantes  
 That are recorded in this scedule here.  
 Your oathes are past, and now subscribe your names:  
 That his owne hand may strike his honour downe,  
 That violates the smallest branch heerein:  
 If you are armd to doe, as sworne to do,  
 Subscribe to your deepe oathes, and keepe it to.  
**Longanill.** I am resolu'd, 'tis but a three yeeres fast.  
 The minde shall banquet, though the body pine,  
 Fat paunches haue leane pates: and dainty bits,  
 Make rich the ribs, but bankerout the wits.  
**Dumaine.** My louing Lord, Dumaine is mortified,  
 The grosser manner of these worlds delights,  
 He throwes vpon the grosse worlds baser slaues:  
 To loue, to wealth, to pompe, I pine and die,  
 With all these liuing in Philosophie.  
**Berowne.** I can but say their protestation ouer,  
 So much, deare Liege, I haue already sworne,  
 That is, to liue and study heere three yeeres.  
 But there are other strict obseruances:  
 As not to see a woman in that terme,  
 Which I hope well is not enrolled there.  
 And one day in a weeke to touch no foode:  
 And but one meale on euery day beside:  
 The which I hope is not enrolled there.  
 And then to sleepe but three houres in the night,  
 And not be seene to winke of all the day.  
 When I was wont to thinke no harme all night,  
 And make a darke night too of halfe the day:

Which I hope well is not enrolled there.  
 O, these are barren taskes, too hard to keepe,  
 Not to see Ladies, study, fast, not sleepe.  
**Ferd.** Your oath is past, to passe away from these.  
**Berow.** Let me say no my Liedge, and if you please,  
 I onely swore to study with your grace,  
 And stay heere in your Court for three yeeres space.  
**Longa.** You swore to that Berowne, and to the rest.  
**Berow.** By yea and nay sir, than I swore in iest.  
 What is the end of study, let me know?  
**Fer.** Why that to know which else wee should not  
 know.  
**Ber.** Things hid & bard (you meane) frō cōmon sense.  
**Ferd.** I, that is studies god-like recompence.  
**Berow.** Come on then, I will sweare to studie so,  
 To know the thing I am forbid to know:  
 As thus, to study where I well may dine,  
 When I to fast expressely am forbid.  
 Or studie where to meet some Mistresse fine,  
 When Mistresses from common sense are hid.  
 Or hauing sworne too hard a keeping oath,  
 Studie to breake it, and not breake my troth.  
 If studies gaine be thus, and this be so,  
 Studie knows that which yet it doth not know,  
 Swear me to this, and I will nere say no.  
**Ferd.** These be the stops that hinder studie quite,  
 And traine our intellects to vaine delight.  
**Ber.** Why? all delights are vaine, and that most vaine  
 Which with paine purchas'd, doth inherit paine,  
 As painefully to poare vpon a Booke,  
 To seeke the light of truth, while truth the while  
 Doth falsely blinde the eye-sight of his looke:  
 Light seeeking light, doth light of light beguile:  
 So ere you finde where light in darkenesse lies,  
 Your light growes darke by losing of your eyes.  
 Studie me how to please the eye indeede,  
 By fixing it vpon a fairer eye,  
 Who dazling so, that eye shall be his heed,  
 And giue him light that it was blinded by.  
 Studie is like the heauens glorious Sunne,  
 That will not be deepe search'd with sawcy lookes:  
 Small haue continuall plodders euer wonne,  
 Saue base authoritie from others Bookes.  
 These earthly Godfathers of heauens lights,  
 That giue a name to euery fixed Starre,  
 Haue no more profit of their shining nights,  
 Than those that walke and wot not what they are.  
 Too much to know, is to know nought but fame:  
 And euery Godfather can giue a name.  
**Fer.** How well hee's read, to reason against reading.

**Dum.** Proceeded well, to stop all good proceeding.  
**Lon.** Hee weedes the corne, and still lets grow the  
 weeding.  
**Ber.** The Spring is neare when greene geesse are a  
 breeding.  
**Dum.** How follows that?  
**Ber.** Fit in his place and time.  
**Dum.** In reason nothing.  
**Ber.** Something then in rime.  
**Ferd.** Berowne is like an enuious sneaping Frost,  
 That bites the first borne infants of the Spring.  
**Ber.** Wel, say I am, why should proud Summer boast,  
 Before the Birds haue any cause to sing?  
 Why should I ioy in any abortiue birth?  
 At Christmas I no more desire a Rose,  
 Then with a Snow in Mayes new fangled shoves:  
 But like of each thing that in season growes.  
 So you to studie now it is too late,  
 That were to clymbe ore the houle to vnlocke the gate.  
**Fer.** Well, fit you out: go home Berowne: adue.  
**Ber.** No my good Lord, I haue sworne to stay with you.  
 And though I haue for barbarisme spoke more,  
 Then for that Angell knowledge you can say,  
 Yet confident Ile keepe what I haue sworne,  
 And bide the penance of each three yeeres day.  
 Giue me the paper, let me reade the same,  
 And to the strictest decrees Ile write my name.  
**Fer.** How well this yeelding rescues thee from shame.  
**Ber.** Item. That no woman shall come within a mile  
 of my Court.  
 Hath this bin proclaimed?  
**Lon.** Foure dayes agoe.  
**Ber.** Let's see the penaltie.  
 On paine of loosing her tongue.  
 Who deuis'd this penaltie?  
**Lon.** Marry that did I.  
**Ber.** Sweete Lord, and why?  
**Lon.** To fright them hence with that dread penaltie,  
 A dangerous law against gentilitie.  
**Item.** If any man be seene to talke with a woman with-  
 in the terme of three yeeres, hee shall indure such  
 publike shame as the rest of the Court shall possibly  
 deuise.  
**Ber.** This Article my Liedge your selfe must breake,  
 For well you know here comes in Embassie  
 The French Kings daughter, with your selfe to speake:  
 A Maide of grace and compleate maiestie,  
 About surrender vp of Aquitaine:  
 To her decrepit, sicke, and bed-rid Father.  
 Therefore this Article is made in vaine,  
 Or vaine comes th'admired Princeesse hither.  
**Fer.** What say you Lords?  
 Why, this was quite forgot.  
**Ber.** So Studie euermore is ouer shot,  
 While it doth study to haue what it would,  
 It doth forget to doe the thing it should:  
 And when it hath the thing it hunteth most,  
 'Tis won as townes with fire, so won, so lost.  
**Fer.** We must of force dispence with this Decree,  
 She must lye here on meere necessitie.  
**Ber.** Necessity will make vs all forsworne  
 Three thousand times within this three yeeres space:  
 For euery man with his affects is borne,  
 Not by might mastered, but by speciall grace.  
 If I breake faith, this word shall breake for me,  
 I am forsworne on meere necessitie.

So to the Lawes at large I write my name,  
 And he that breakes them in the least degree,  
 Stands in attainder of eternall shame.  
 Suggestions are to others as to me:  
 But I beleue although I seeme so loth,  
 I am the last that will last keepe his oth.  
 But is there no quicke recreation granted?  
**Fer.** I that there is, our Court you know is hanted  
 With a refined trauailer of Spaine,  
 A man in all the worlds new fashion planted,  
 That hath a mint of phraes in his braine:  
 One, who the musicke of his owne vaine tongue,  
 Doth rauish like inchanting harmonie:  
 A man of complements whom right and wrong  
 Haue chose as vmpire of their mutinie.  
 This childe of fancie that Armado hight,  
 For interim to our studies shall relate,  
 In high-borne words the worth of many a Knight:  
 From tawnie Spaine lost in the worlds debate.  
 How you delight my Lords, I know not I,  
 But I protest I loue to heare him lie,  
 And I will vse him for my Minstrelle.  
**Berow.** Armado is a most illustrious wight,  
 A man of fire, new words, fashions owne Knight.  
**Lon.** Costard the swaine and he, shall be our sport,  
 And so to studie, three yeeres is but short.

Enter a Constable with Costard with a Letter.

**Const.** Which is the Dukes owne person.  
**Ber.** This fellow, What would'st?  
**Con.** I my selfe reprehend his owne person, for I am  
 his graces Tharborough: But I would see his own person  
 in flesh and blood.  
**Ber.** This is he.  
**Con.** Signior Arme, Arme commend you:  
 Ther's villanie abroad, this letter will tell you more.  
**Clo.** Sir the Contempts thereof are as touching  
 mee.  
**Fer.** A letter from the magnificent Armado.  
**Ber.** How low soeuer the matter, I hope in God for  
 high words.  
**Lon.** A high hope for a low heauen, God grant vs pa-  
 tience.  
**Ber.** To heare, or forbear hearing.  
**Lon.** To heare meekely sir, and to laugh moderately,  
 or to forbear both.  
**Ber.** Well sir, be it as the stile shall giue vs cause to  
 cline in the merrinesse.  
**Clo.** The matter is to me sir, as concerning Iaquenetta.  
 The manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.  
**Ber.** In what manner?  
**Clo.** In manner and forme following sir all those three.  
 I was seene with her in the Mannor house, sitting with  
 her vpon the Forme, and taken following her into the  
 Parke: which put to gether, is in manner and forme  
 following. Now sir for the manner; It is the manner  
 of a man to speake to a woman, for the forme in some  
 forme.  
**Ber.** For the following sir.  
**Clo.** As it shall follow in my correction, and God de-  
 fend the right.  
**Fer.** Will you heare this Letter with attention?  
**Ber.** As we would heare an Oracle.  
**Clo.** Such is the simplicitie of man to harken after the  
 flesh.